

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PEKING 01476 080851Z

12

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O R 080808Z AUG 75

FM USLO PEKING

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4183

INFO AMEMASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 1476

EXDIS

NOFORN DISSEM

E.O.11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: PFOR CB

SUBJECT: SIHANOUK'S TRAVEL PLANS

1. AFP PEKING IS FILING STORY THIS AFTERNOON (AUGUST 8) SAYING SIHANOUK HAS BEEN INVITED BY THE RED KHMER AUTHORITY TO RETURN TO PHNOM PENH BUT HAS NOT YET GIVEN A POSITIVE REPLY. THIEUNN PRASITH FROM THE CAMBODIAN EMBASSY IN PEKING (IN CHARGE OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR) IS SAID TO HAVE VISITED PYONGYANG ON JULY 18 TO CONVEY THE INVITATION OF THE PHNOM PENH AUTHORITIES FOR SIHANOUK, MONIQUE ANB PEN NOUTH AND HIS WIFE TO RETURN TO CAMBODIA AT ANY TIME CONVENIENT AFTER AUGUST 1. SARIN CHAAK REPORTEDLY ACCOMPANIED PRASITH ON HIS VISIT. ACCORDING TO THE STORY, SIHANOUK PLANS TO GO TO TIENTSIN AROUND AUGUST 20 FOR A BRIEF MEDICAL CHECKUP AND THEN RETURN TO PEKING TO DECIDE WHETHER TO ACCEPT THE INVITATION. IF SIHANOUK DOES RETURN TO PHNOM PENH, HE WILL DO SO FOR A SHORT VISIT IN THE FIRST PART OF SEPTEMBER.

2. BEGIN XGDS-2, NOFORN DISSEM. AFP CORRESPONDENT
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PAGE 02 PEKING 01476 080851Z

TOLD USLO OFFICER THAT SOURCE OF STORY IS A CAMBODIAN

CLOSE TO SIHANOUK WHO WAS IN ON THE DISCUSSION IN PYONGYANG. SOURCE RETURNED BRIEFLY TO PEKING. SOURCE ALSO SAID--BUT AFP IS NOT FILING--THAT IN FACT SIHANOUK IS VERY FRIGHTENED. SINCE THE INVITATION DID NOT INCLUDE MEMBERS OF HIS ENTOURAGE OTHER THAN PEN NOUTH, SIHANOUK FEARS THE KHMER ROUGE MAY ARREST HIM ON ARRIVAL IN PHNOM PENH. THIS IS THT SECOND OR THIRD INVITATION SIHANOUK HAS RECEIVED FROM THE KHMER ROUGE. HE NO LONGER CAN USE HIS SICK MOTHER AS AN EXCUSE FOR NOT RETURNING AND KNOWS THAT THE BIG MOMENT OF DECISION HAS COME. SIHANOUK, REPORTEDLY, DOES NOT PLAN TO DECIDE UNTIL AFTER HE CAN TALK THE SITUATION OVER WITH CHOU EN-LAI IN PEKING AND PERHAPS RECEIVE SOME CHINESE GUARANTEE FOR HIS SAFETY.

3. AFP'S SOURCE FURTHER SAID THAT WHEN THE INVITATION ARRIVED, SIHANOUK TOOK A POLL OF HIS CABINET TO SEE HOW MANY OF HIS FOLLOWERS WANTED TO RETURN TO CAMBODIA. NOT ONE VOTED FOR RETURN. SIHANOUK HIMSELF IS SAID TO BELIEVE THAT THE REGIME IN PHNOM PENH IS "FASCIST" AND IS NOW HOPING THEIR EXCESSES WILL CAUSE THEM TO FALL FROM POWER. THE SIHANOUKISTS OPENLY REFER TO THE KHMER ROUGE AS THE "ENEMY". SIHANOUK IS ALSO SAID TO BE UNHAPPY BECAUSE KHIEU SAMPHAN HAS BROKEN THE PACT AGREED TO EARLIER IN PEKING WHICH CALLED FOR KHIEU SAMPHAN TO RUN INTERNAL AFFAIRS ONLY, LEAVING FOREIGN RELATIONS TO SIHANOUK.

4. AFP CORRESPONDENT SAID THE RECENT RUMORS THAT SIHANOUK PLANNED TO RETURN TO CAMBODIA STEMMED FROM STATEMENTS BY THE CAMBODIAN AMBASSADOR IN PEKING TO TWO OTHER DIPLOMATS ON JULY 19. APPARENTLY, THE KHMER ROUGE (HE SAYS THE AMBASSADOR AND REST OF THE CAMBODIAN EMBASSY STAFF HERE ARE KHMER ROUGE) ASSUMED SIHANOUK WOULD ACCEPT THE INVITATION THEY HAD TENDERED EARLIER.

5. BOTH THE INFORMATION IN PARAS 2 AND 3 NOT FILED BY AFP AND THESE SOURCES ARE VERY SENSITIVE. PLEASE PROTECT. END XGDS-2, NOFORN DISSEM.

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PAGE 03 PEKING 01476 080851Z

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, POLICIES, INVITATIONS, VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 AUG 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: KelleyW0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975PEKING01476
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X2
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750274-0229
From: PEKING
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750869/aaaacjfo.tel
Line Count: 108
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: KelleyW0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <13 JUN 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <28 OCT 2003 by KelleyW0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SIHANOUK'S TRAVEL PLANS
TAGS: PFOR, CB, (SIHANOUK, NORODOM), (THIEUNN PRASITH)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006